

EDITORIAL

The First 20 Years

Paula P. Schnurr

National Center for PTSD, White River Junction, VT and Dartmouth Medical School, Lebanon, NH

This issue of the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* begins our 21st year of publication. The field of traumatic stress studies has grown and matured in the 20 years since the inaugural issue appeared in 1988. We have a substantially greater understanding of what trauma is and how it leads to difficulties such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and to personal growth as well. We also have a substantially greater understanding of the biological, psychological, and behavioral changes associated with trauma. We have good questionnaires and interviews to assess trauma and its effects, and by using these tools have come to appreciate the scope of the problem worldwide. We know much more than we did 20 years ago about how to treat the adverse effects of trauma, and even have several evidence-based practice guidelines. Information about treatment grew so much during the past few years that ISTSS—the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies—has updated its own practice guideline (Foa, Keane, & Friedman, 2000) with a new edition to appear in 2008 (Foa, Keane, & Friedman, in press).

However, the growth of knowledge about prevention has not kept pace with the growth of knowledge about these other topics. Despite increased understanding of how to intervene—or not—in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic event, we still do not have much solid evidence about how to prepare someone for the experience and prevent negative consequences from occurring. I am grateful to Elana Newman, the Past President of ISTSS, for focusing the 2007 annual meeting on prevention. I was impressed by the extent to which the meeting's co-chairs, Joanne Davis and Jon Elhai, managed to emphasize the theme of prevention in their selection of presentations while maintaining diversity of the specific content. It was stimulating to learn more about prevention from so many different perspectives. We will be publishing selected presentations from the meeting in a special issue of the *Journal* later this year.

The need for information about prevention is particularly acute given the ongoing conflict in Iraq. When I started receiving manuscripts in 2005, I did not imagine that the fighting would be still be ongoing in 2008; to be honest, I worried about this possibility, but hoped that my worry would be unnecessary. It was not. Psychological and physical casualties continue to rise among both military personnel and civilians. One of the most recent

articles on the topic indicates that the prevalence of PTSD and other readjustment difficulties in military personnel is actually higher 3–6 months after returning from deployment (Milliken, Auchterlonie, & Hoge, 2007). The conflict in Iraq has permitted extraordinary opportunities to study the effects of warzone trauma. Admittedly, most of the research has focused on military personnel rather than on Iraqi and foreign civilians; nevertheless, it has helped us learn a great deal about the immediate effects of war. Later in 2008, we will be issuing a Call for Papers on the Iraq War to disseminate this knowledge and to encourage future study. We aim to solicit a broad range of content on all affected populations. The specific details will be posted on the *Journal's* Website, <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jots>, in the spring.

The *Journal* published two special issues in 2007: one devoted to the neurobiology of PTSD, edited by Matt Friedman and Roger Pitman, and one devoted to selected content from the ISTSS 2006 annual meeting, edited by Sandro Galea. Both issues contained excellent and groundbreaking content. In fact, several articles in the annual meeting issue—about the prevalence of PTSD in Vietnam veterans—received national media attention. As in prior years, we also published a special section of articles selected from the 2006 annual Conference on Trauma Research Methods, edited by Jeffrey Sonis, Dan King, Lynda King, Dean Lauterbach, and Patrick Palmieri; we will also be publishing a special section of the 2007 meeting in 2008. I am a strong advocate for the free market economy of regular submission and peer-review systems, but I believe these special publications enrich the information we can provide to readers.

Submissions continued apace with 2006, when they rose substantially from prior years. We expect to receive approximately 350 articles by the end of 2007. Turnaround time for initial decisions decreased from an average of just less than 49 days in 2006 to 35 days in 2007. The average ranged from just over 3 days for articles that were rejected without review to 64 days for articles that received a revise and resubmit decision. The rate of acceptance for articles submitted during 2006 was 27%. Too few final decisions have been made for 2007 submissions to permit us to calculate a meaningful estimate for this year; I expect the rate will

be 20–25%. The journal impact factor was 1.898 in 2006, the most recent year for which data are available.

This is a time of year for comings and goings. At the end of 2007, Chris Frueh and Chip Benight stepped down as Associate Editors. I would like to take this public opportunity to thank them for their many years of service to the *Journal*. It has been a privilege to work with them. Moving into the vacancies are Nina Sayer, who came on board as an Associate Editor early in 2007, and Sandro Galea, who joins us in 2008. Despite the loss of Chip and Chris, these new members will further strengthen our editorial team. I'd also like to thank retiring members of the editorial board: Sarah Cook, Lib Hembree, Gregory Jurkovic, Mindy Mechanic, Thomas Mellman, Elizabeth Midlarsky, Sue Orsillo, Stuart Turner, and Jennifer Vasterling. I look forward to working with the new members: JoAnn Difede, Ariel Lang, Craig Rosen, Stan Rosenberg, Sarah Ullman, Eric Vermetten, and Dawne Vogt (who was added in early 2007).

Every year I feel it is important to communicate my vision for *JTS*. I often receive inquiries about the nature of the content we publish. Sometimes, there are misperceptions that I try to correct;

one recurring misperception is that we do not publish clinical material or review articles. This is not true. We welcome clinical articles and case studies, as well as meta-analyses and qualitative reviews. We strive to include diverse topics that are relevant for a general audience. I firmly believe that maximizing the diversity of content published in *JTS* is simply the best way to move the field forward. Trauma is such a multifaceted topic that spans so many levels—from the microscopic to the multinational—we need to stay open to the broadest possible range of ideas.

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